

Women in China

AP World History

Patriarchal

- ❖ Traditional Guides
 - Ruler guides subject
 - Father guides son
 - Husband guides wife
- ❖ Confucianism order
- ❖ Women must obey father, husband, and sons

Rights

- ❖ Could not pick spouse
- ❖ Could not divorce or remarry
- ❖ Husband could divorce her
- ❖ Could not inherit property or wealth
- ❖ Concubines

Tang Dynasty

- ❖ Dynasty most progressive
- ❖ Land distribution included widows
- ❖ Mutual divorce acceptable - women could remarry
- ❖ Access to broadening education system
- ❖ Military skills
- ❖ Social restrictions lifted

Empress Wu Zetian, 624-705

- ❖ The only female Empress in China's history who ruled alone. 🙅
- ❖ Searched for outstanding individuals to attract to her court.
- ❖ Construction of new irrigation systems.
- ❖ Buddhism was the favored state religion.
 - Financed the building of many Buddhist temples.
- ❖ She appointed cruel and sadistic ministers to seek out her enemies.



Footbinding

- ❖ Origins unknown - several legends
- ❖ Began in Tang, fully accepted in Song
- ❖ Small feet = beauty



Footbinding in Tang China

❖ Broken toes by 3 years of age.



❖ Size 5 ½ shoe on the right



Footbinding in Tang China



Mothers bound their daughters' feet.

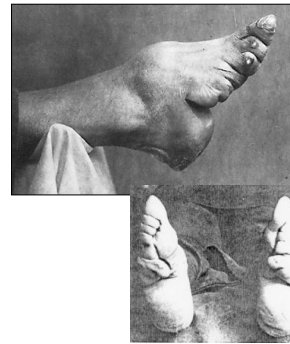
Footbinding in Tang China



❖ For upper-class girls, it became a new custom.



The Results of Footbinding



Footbinding Results

- ❖ 1997 UCSF Study
- ❖ Findings: more likely to fall, less able to stand from a chair, less able to squat, lower bone density

Questions

- ❖ Footbinding started with the upper classes, why did it become widespread across classes?
- ❖ Where else in history do we see similar practices?
- ❖ Does modern society have equivalent practices?